

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 11555 281320Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-08 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 IO-13 PA-01
NEAE-00 /075 W

-----122319 281351Z /45

P R 281245Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3071
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11555

PASS USDA FAS GRAIN AND FOOD DIVISION

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, IBRD, IN, PK
SUBJECT: INDIAN WHEAT TO PAKISTAN?

1. INDIAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE CARRIED STORIES CLAIMING THAT THE WORLD BANK HAS APPROACHED INDIA FOR A LOAN OF UP TO ONE MILLION MT OF WHEAT TO PAKISTAN BECAUSE OF SUPPOSED SERIOUS FOOD-GRAIN SHORTAGE THERE. ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS, INDIA HAS RESPONDED SYMPATHETICALLY TO THE REQUEST, HAS INDICATED THAT IT COULD OFFER AT LEAST 500,000 MT, BUT HAS NOT YET RECEIVED ANY REQUEST FROM PAKS. STORY BY G.K. REDDY IN JULY 26 EDITION OF HINDU (WHERE NEWS FIRST BROKE) SAID THAT WHEAT PRODUCTION IN PAKISTAN HAD DROPPED SHARPLY FROM AN ANNUAL AVERAGE OF 12 MILLION MT TO JUST OVER 8 MILLION MT THIS YEAR, LEAVING A GAP OF ALMOST 4 MILLION MT TO BE IMPORTED. REDDY ALSO WROTE THAT ONLY INDIA CAN EASE THIS BOTTLENECK BECAUSE THE PORT FACILITIES AT KARACHI CANNOT HANDLE MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION MT OF IMPORTED WHEAT, AND INDIA CAN TRANSPORT THE GRAIN TO PAK-
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ISTAN BY RAIL AND ROAD. JULY 28 TIMES OF INDIA EDITORIAL RECOMMENDED THAT GOI MOVE QUICKLY TO HELP PAKISTAN AND EVEN MAKE A TOEKN GIFT OF GRAIN TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

2. MEA JOINT SECRETARY ASRANI TOLD DCM BEFORE STORIES APPEARED THAT WORLD BANK HAD APPROACHED GOI ABOUT POSSIBILITY

OF SUPPLYING INDIAN WHEAT TO PAKISTAN BECAUSE OF ESTIMATE DEFICIT OF 2.5 MILLION MT THIS YEAR. ASRANI SEEMED TO REACT SYMPATHETICALLY AND NOTED THAT INDIAN WHEAT COULD BE SHIPPED OVERLAND EASILY AND DID NOT HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE CONGESTED KARACHI PORT.

3. GOI SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF FOOD, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION, TOLD AGATT HE UNDERSTANDS PAKISTAN WHEAT HARVEST WAS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY RUST. HE SAID GOI WAS SYMPATHETIC TO ASSISTING ITS NEIGHBORS MEET FOOD REQUIREMENTS, AND REQUESTS WILL BE CONSIDERED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS REQUIRING HIGH LEVEL GOVERNMENT DECISION. THE SECRETARY FURTHER ADDED THAT, APPROPRIATELY, REQUESTS SHOULD BE INITIATED ON A BILATERAL APPROACH RATHER THAN THROUGH AN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTION SUCH AS THE WORLD BANK.

4. WORLD BANK REPRESENTATIVE KRASKE TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE HAD FIRST HEARD ABOUT THE MATTER FROM THE INDIAN PRESS AND THAT HE HAD CABLED BANK HEADQUARTERS FOR CLARIFICATION. AFTER HEARING FROM WASHINGTON AND ISLAMABAD, KRASKE TOLD US THAT THE STORIES ABOUT A BANK APPROACH TO INDIA HAD QUOTE ABSOLUTELY NO TRUTH UNQUOTE. HE STATED THAT THE BANK HAD DISCUSSED THE FOOD PROBLEM WITH THE PAKS AND HAD CONSIDERED A MEETING OF THE AID TO PAKISTAN CONSORTIUM ON THIS MATTER, BUT THAT THIS MEETING HAD BEEN POSTPONED TO ALLOW PAKISTAN TO REFLECT ON THE PROBLEM. KRASKE ALSO SAID THAT THE WORLD BANK OFFICE IN IS-
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LAMABAD HAD SUGGESTED TO THE PAKS THAT THEY MIGHT APPROACH THE GOI FOR WHEAT.

5. COMMENT: APPEARANCE OF STORIES NOW IS RATHER PUZZLING. THE MOST PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION IS THAT SOMEONE IN THE GOI LEAKED THE NEWS IN A DISTORTED FASHION AS A WAY OF KILLING THE PROPOSAL. WE WILL BE CLOSELY FOLLOWING AND REPORTING ON FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.
GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WHEAT, PRESS COMMENTS, LOANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE11555
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
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